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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

of violets, pansies, buttercups or such simple flowers mingled with water lines of gold.

In this part of the country after the sea has tempted so many thitherwards, during the hot weather, it is not surprising to find that the oyster, mussel and scallop are among the new decorative forms. Oyster shells overlapping one another and among the new designs for doilies. They are worked in white wash silk on linen in short and long stitch, and are outlined with gold. The shell-like markings are rendered in satin stitch. The scallop shell gives shape to doilies and the radiating lines are given in Kensington stitch with shell tinted silks.

CHRISTMAS SOUVENIRS AND NAME CARDS.

BY CARRIE MAY ASHTON.

THE successful hostess always plans something novel and unique for her guests but is it no easy task to devise these surprises in the way of souvenirs and name cards.

Some of the most exquisite ones are fashioned of bolting cloth or silk mull laid over lengths of pale pink, blue, violet and green ribbon of a good width. Appropriate quotations in illuminated letters are inscribed on these cards. "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," "Our true content is all for your delight," "Eat, Drink and be Merry," "Eat and Drink as Friends" and "Happy they who take the middle course," are a few lines of the many quotations that are suitable to any occasion.

Other equally dainty cards are of heavy white or cream paper; sometimes three or four leaves are fastened together with a little bow of ribbon. A spray of holly, mistletoe, bitter-sweet berries, or a little snow scene is done in water colors on the cover is especially suitable for the Christmas tide. Below are given a variety of quotations appropriate for these dainty holiday souvenirs.

"Christmas is coming, and what will it bring?
Many a pleasant and gladdening thing;
Meetings and greetings, and innocent mirth:
All that is brightest and best on the earth."

"Sure Christmas is a happy time
In spite of wintry weather,
For laugh and song, and jest go round
When dear friends meet together;
And hearts are warm, and eyes beam bright
In the ruddy glow of Christmas night."

May piety with wishes placed above
And steady loyalty and faithful love,
Be thy blessings this Christmas tide.

"Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth,
The silent snow possessed the earth;
And calmly fell on Christmas eve."

"As Christmas offerings meet your eyes,
Still closer be sweet friendship's ties."

"True love shall live thro' sorrows wintry storms,
And bloom afresh on this glad Christmas morn."

"Joy and plenty in the cottage,
Peace and feasting in the hall;
And the voices of the children,
Ring out clear above it all;
A merry Christmas."

"May health and joy, and peace be thine
Upon this Christmas day,
And happy faces round thee shine
As plenteous as the flowers in May."

"Hark, the pearly air is trembling,
Liquid music floats along,
Angels in sweet joy assembling,
Thrill the skies with heavenly song.
'Peace on Earth' is their refrain;
O, be it yours this peace to gain."

Christmas comes, let every heart
In Christmas customs bear its part:
The 'old' be 'young' the sad be gay,
And smiles chase every care away."

"Again the festive season's here,
With all that can delight and cheer;
O, may you nothing lack each day,
But find fresh blessings strewn your way."

"O joyous be your Christmas tide.
And bright your New Year, too;
To you may lover ne'er be denied,
May all your friends be true."

Now Christmas comes with hearty cheer.
May kindly thoughts go round,
And bring to you a glad New Year,
With peace and plenty crowned."

"Upon a gayer, happier scene,
Never did holly berries peer.
Or ivy throw its trailing green,
On brighter forms than there are here,
Nor Christmas in his old arm chair
Smile upon lips and brows more fair
Then let us sing amid our cheer,
Old Christmas still comes once a year."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ELLEN J. MILLER. "Can you give me some instructions in reference to ebonizing wood? Following suggestions from 'The Home Workshop,' I have made a cabinet, the foundation of which was a dry-goods box. And having succeeded, so entirely to my satisfaction, in constructing this cabinet, were not the expense more than I can afford, I should adopt a hint thrown out by you, to cover the cabinet with plush, inside and outside, and finish it with brass-headed nails. But this seeming out of the question with me, the next best finish I can think of for my cabinet, is to ebonize it; and you will greatly increase my obligation if you will let me know how ebonizing is done."

The best ebonizing preparation that can be used, or that which most nearly resembles the real ebony in fact, is lamp-black secured from the smoke of kerosene. To secure this black, all you have to do is to turn up the wick of a kerosine lamp sufficiently high to produce a dense smoke. By this means, in a few moments, the chimney of the lamp will be coated with a very fine, smooth, oily soot. Let it accumulate until it hangs thickly on the glass, then you will extinguish the blaze, and suffer the glass to cool. The soot can then be scraped on a flannel cloth; the operation repeated a number of times, you will gather enough soot for your purpose. Apply the soot with a flannel cloth, and repeat the operation, rubbing the soot in thoroughly, until your wood is of a fine, smooth black; the most perfect imitation of ebony that can be affected. It must not be varnished. Should you hesitate about undertaking to ebonize your cabinet in this manner, because of blacking your hands more than you would like, you can procure from any store in which artists' materials are sold, an ebonizing preparation, which is applied with a brush. But in the use of any preparation for ebonizing, we are advised that it should be well rubbed in with a piece of flannel, and that the furniture treated should not be varnished. Ebony has a dull lustre, and in all imitations of this beautiful wood, a glistening surface must be avoided.

F. G. L. "I venture to ask a question regarding table-linen. Have you anything new to suggest in reference to centerpieces, sidepieces, scarfs, doilies, or other fanciful table furnishing in linen? I am a young housekeeper, and take special pride in my table, and believing that neat and tasteful appointments conduce to the enjoyment of the viands, I have determined that, as far as my own industry will avail, my table shall be lacking in nothing which might add to the tastefulness of arrangement, or which might please the eyes of my husband or guests. If you can assist me with a few suggestions, I shall be grateful."

There is nothing indeed which adds more to gustatory pleasures than a neat and tasteful service; and now that fancy enters so decidedly into the laying of a table, we do not wonder that we are frequently appealed to by our correspondents in reference to the dainty fancies which have appeared recently in table-linen. The most novel linen service which has lately come under our notice, consists of a circular piece for the center of the table, with four small circular pieces for conserve dishes, and a dozen finger-bowl doilies to match. Plain linen damask, or satteen, was used for the set, and the decoration was a garland border of clover leaves, done in darning with clover-pink silk, outlined with a white cord couched on in buttonhole stitch, with green silk. The darning was carefully and closely done, the leaves so filled in as, at a glance, to give the effect of a pink surface, and the entire effect was pleasing; but as green is now very fashionable in embroidery, and as a liberty was taken with the suggestions of nature, in the conventional use of pink in leaves, our correspondent will be sure of something more

pleasing if she will use green alone, in working the clover-leaf garland. Another idea in a linen desert set, is seen in a square for the center of the table, mats for conserve dishes, and finger-bowl doilies, embroidered in oak-leaf design. The material employed is plain linen damask, and the embroidery is in white, done with Brainard & Armstrong's Mediæval silk. The center square shows a border of four oak leaves of magnified size, and the conserve mats and doilies are each an oak-leaf of a size somewhat larger than natural oak leaves. The edge of the leaves are done in buttonhole-stitch, with a long stitch and then a short stitch, or stitches of irregular length, as in Kensington embroidery; and the veining is done in the outline stitch. A happy semblance to nature is secured by filling in the oak-leaf design with what is known among embroiderers as the "honey-comb-stitch"—the reticulated effect being produced by covering the surface of the leaves within the border with buttonhole stitches taken at spaces of about an eighth of an inch apart, and one stitch within another. The oak-leaf design done in green would also be very handsome; and the oak-leaf done in shaded brown silk would be unique and effective. Should you wish to be economical in work of the kind, for silk in the embroidery, you can substitute Barbour's flax thread.

JANE McL. TURNER. "I have been told that ladies in New York and in other American cities, are experimenting successfully in the making of pottery. Let me know, if you please, if you are informed on the subject, if this be true; and if you can enlighten me somewhat in regard to the process adopted by them in their undertaking. I have a taste for ceramics, and if sufficiently encouraged, I am disposed to attempt the making of pottery myself. Unless asking more of you than you deem proper, I shall be thankful if you will advise me in this matter."

We are glad to advise our correspondents in any direction requested, as far as it may be in our power. It is true that certain ladies in New York are very successfully experimenting in the making of pottery; the celebrated Rockwood pottery, for which a first prize was awarded in the late International Exposition at Paris, had its beginning in the experiments of the ladies of a certain prominent family in Cincinnati; and there seems no reason why pottery-making should not be carried to as great perfection in this country as in any other. We have not, doubtless, those engaged in the manufacture of pottery, as much skill as there may be found in China, Japan, England, France, Italy, and other countries, nor have we as fine artists for the decoration; but we are said to have clay as excellent as can be found anywhere on the globe, and with the manufacture so established as to be undoubtedly profitable; the skill in the craft, and the artists will be at hand. The starting-point in the making of pottery by all people has been the same, or very nearly identical, *i. e.*, the fashioning of wet clay into vessels for domestic use, and hardening of these vessels by some heating process—in the sun for instance or by fire—the excellence arrived at in the wares having been by slow degrees of manipulation and experiment. But to give you an idea of this, greater space would be required than we can spare. We will say, however, that, clay of a suitable chemical composition at command, it is wetted up with water, kneaded, pounded and rolled out as is the dough of wheaten flour for the making of bread. In this condition it is in readiness for moulding. The moulds used are of plaster of Paris, and made in halves, the clay is laid in and pressed into every valute of the mould with the fingers, and when smooth, the halves of the mould are joined and bound firmly together, and the seam is pressed perfectly smooth. The vessel is then left to set or harden, and when set, the band is removed, and the bowl vase or moer is taken from the mould, all roughnesses being now scraped off with a knife. If the coloring or decoration is intended to be the underglaze (and this is generally the case in pieces of solid color, as the celebrated "peach-bloom vase," of the Morgan collection, for example), the coloring is non-applied. After sufficiently dried, the vessel is sent to the kiln or furnace devised for the purpose and for from twenty-four, to forty-eight hours, it is subjected to white heat; the fire consuming itself, and the pottery fired is allowed to cool gradually. After this, floral painting, gilding or other decoration may be applied to the pottery, when a second firing is necessary to fix it. The most of the imitations of Royal Worcester, Doulton and other celebrated porcelains, painted by our American ladies, are on uncolored pieces manufactured with decorations in view; while there are imitations of equal cleverness in the possession of ladies of our knowledge built up from the clay; the pretty treasure, in all its details from inception to finish being the work of their own hands. We have been shown vases in the *bleu de roi* of coloring as clear as specimens of Royal Dresden porcelain, and inecandine and *bleu de roi*, almost as handsome as the glazes from China. An

inspection of specimens of the Rockwood pottery will convince any lady of the possibilities within her power, in the domain of industrial art. We would, by every means that we can command, encourage the making of pottery by the ladies of our country.

MARIE C. DEAN. From reliable sources, I have heard of the prospect of a revival of interest in the making of macramé lace. More than once I have seen allusion made to macramé lace in 'The Home Workshop,' and I agree in the opinion enunciated in the 'Workshop;' there is no lace that has yet appeared which is as handsome or as suitable as this is for furniture-trimming. I am told that it has an interesting history. Do you know anything of this history? and will you tell me where I can find a book of instructions for making macramé lace? I am too far distant from the city to hope to find a person who could teach me how to make the lace, but I am ingenious, and, unless it is very difficult to accomplish, I am inclined to think that, with a lucid hand-book of the details of stitches and patterns, I may be able to do the work."

We are glad to know that there is a probability that an interest in macramé work will be revived. All the while, with its merit fully appreciated, we have felt that its discarding might be, or indeed was, only temporary. We are not able to tell from what source the term "macramé" has been derived, as the word is not to be found in any of the well-known French dictionaries. But the macramé lace, as now known, is the *punto a grappo*, or the old knotted point of Italy—one of the laces which in former times was in use as trimmings for altar-cloths and clerical vestments. As the name *punto a grappo* signifies, it is made by knotting the threads which enter into the work, the woof-threads, so to speak, knotted into interesting patterns on the transverse or warp threads, which are called "leaders." The work is simple; a handbook of instructions for macramé lace, with a patented desk for the work, is furnished by Barbour, the famous flax thread manufacturer, and with the book and the convenient lace desk, any lady at all expert in crochet knitting, or other fancy work with threads, can easily follow any one of the numerous patterns given. Beside, the accomplishment one pattern of this lace, opens the way for device, and many modifications of patterns present themselves to the lace-maker. Flax, silk and cotton threads have all been used in macramé lace work, while we would deprecate the use of cotton in any work really as handsome and valuable as this lace is. As with other celebrated points, it should be made to hand down to future generations, and, therefore, only the handsomest tapestries should be employed in making it. There is a story afloat that the presence of the *punto a grappo* in America is due to the finding of a small piece of it among the locked-up treasures of a chest in the attic of an old house in Maryland. Doubtless some youthful explorer of this interesting attic, exhumed the piece of choice lace from its hiding place. At any rate, it is said that a portion of it was unravelled, and from this unravelled end the secret of the *point* was discovered. However true or pictorial, this story may be, it has not been very many years since the making of the *punto a grappo* has been an industry and a pastime with American ladies. It deserves a place in the *repertoire* of everybody's handy-work, and we shall be delighted to see it regain the popularity which it has lost, perhaps through the fact that to make it is somewhat hard on the fair worker's hands. We frequently find patterns of macramé lace in the London *Queen*, showing the appreciation in which it is held in England, and recently certain of our illustrated periodicals, devoted to woman and the household, have published patterns.

ANNIE W. "Can you suggest anything in wall decoration for my fourteen-year-old daughter. She is taking lessons in painting, and she does flower painting quite nicely, but she is timid, and fears to undertake any piece of work but the simplest, so I turn to you for advice, hoping you may have some to offer, out of the chances that are observant, as you must necessarily be, must have in a city, to take in current ideas."

If simplicity be the aim of your young daughter, in her wish to do decorative work, she can make pretty wall plaques of the plates made of wooden shavings, sent out by bakers, under their cakes and pies. Some of these plaques are extremely pretty, done both in flowers and landscapes; and they are prettier when the wood is left unpainted, for the background with a rim of gold on the edges a finish. A pleasing study in a plaque, painted by a young country girl, is a cascade, with its surroundings of great boulders overhung with evergreens, near her home; while a companion piece is the study of the river above the rapids, with a cottage on its banks, and a chain of mountains in the distance. The large scallop shells, sometimes found in beds of marl and other fossil deposits, are pretty when painted on the inside, especially in water-scapes. Both the plaques and the shells should be hung with cords. There is a prettiness in hanging pictures by ribbons, but it is not artistic, and in all efforts in the direction of art, the art idea should have consideration.